

# Workshop Summary

**Project:** WSDOT – I-90 Operations Study

**Meeting:** Study Advisory Group (SAG) Workshop

**Location:** WSDOT Eastern Region Office

**Date/Time:** Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017 (9:00 a.m. – noon)

## Attendees:

### **WSDOT PMT Members**

- Mike Bjordahl (WSDOT Eastern Region Project Manager)
- Larry Frostad (WSDOT Eastern Region Engineer)
- Monica Harwood (WSDOT Statewide Traffic Operations Engineer) – by phone
- Bonnie Gow (WSDOT Eastern Region, Sr. Transportation Planner)

### **SAG Members**

- Karl Otterstrom (STA Planning and Development)
- Karen Sutula (East Central Neighborhood Committee Chair)
- Alicia Ayars (East Central Neighborhood Committee Vice-Chair)
- Ryan Stewart (SRTC Senior Planner)
- Brandon Blankenagel (City of Spokane)
- Joe Tortorelli (WSTC)
- Mike Kress (WSDOT TMC Supervisor)
- Terrence Lynch (WSDOT Project Manager)

### **Consultant Team:**

- Jen Bachman (DKS, Deputy Project Manager)
- Jim Peters (DKS, Project Manager and Principal)
- Dennis Mitchell (DKS)

## Overall Comments

- Budget for first phase of projects is about \$5 million (follow up discussion to assume \$4.4 million). Focus area is between Geiger Heights and Broadway.
- Implementation plan will outline recommended phasing beyond the initial phase with a ten-year time frame. In ten years, the North Spokane Corridor (NSC) project should be constructed.
- Noted the connection between improved safety and the impact that has on improving mobility

## Discussion of Strategies

### Ramp Metering

- Consider including a bypass or queue jump for transit.
- WSDOT will not provide a queue jump for HOV due to enforcement issues.
- SAG members expressed concern about potential queuing on local roadways. Agreement from project team that queuing and storage will be further addressed before ramp meters are implemented.
- Driver education would be a key component of this strategy.
- WB on-ramp from Sprague regularly backs up and should be considered for ramp metering.
- Poll results: 6 responses, 100% supportive of advancing ramp metering.

### Active Traffic Management (ATM)

- No comments
- Poll results: 7 responses, 67% supportive of advancing ATM, 33% undecided

### Wrong Way Notification System

- SAG suggested automatic spikes that can retract as needed for maintenance vehicles
- Option to implement in phases by adding detection to the off-ramps to identify the ramps where drivers are accessing I-90 the wrong way.
- Suggested investigating the interchanges to understand which ones have geometry that lend themselves to drivers accessing the wrong way.
- Noted experience of encountering a wrong way driver on US-195 heading NB in SB lane, likely that the driver accessed it from 16<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- Consider other options like lowering the wrong way signs. WSDOT recently enlarged all the wrong way signs.
- Poll results: 8 responses, 63% supportive of advancing wrong way notification system, 38% undecided.
  - One reason stated for undecided was the high cost and difficulty knowing where to target.

### Traffic Incident Management (TIM)

- Discussion of instant tow and adding another dedicated incident responder.
- WSDOT already enlisted a third full time dedicated incident responder.
- Need to continue analysis of the IR and where they respond.
- Consider the quick notification system for IR staff.
- Poll results: 8 responses, 63% supportive of advancing TIM strategies, 38% undecided.

## Work Zone Management

- Staffing issues around the work zones creates issues around work hours for the employers.
- Discussion of limiting work zone hours to night-time operations.
- Poll results: 8 responses, 75% supportive of advancing Work Zone Management strategies, 25% undecided.

## Ramp Closures

- Discussion that the analysis focused only on the safety element and the potential to reduce crashes. The impact of diverted traffic was not evaluated.
  - Concern from SAG members that this analysis does not tell the full story.
  - Desire to understand operational impacts in addition to safety impacts
- Agreement from several SAG members that ramp and interchange spacing along the study corridor is less than optimal (does not meet best practices)
- Spacing is a key issue for the Browne and Lincoln ramps, however, there are fewer crashes in that weave area than other ramps.
- Concern about the Division off-ramp closure:
  - Division off-ramp will be impacted by the NSC.
  - Contentious issue for the East Central Neighborhood.
  - Division is marked as a gateway into downtown.
  - Diversion of traffic to 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue puts more traffic through an impoverished neighborhood.
- Recommendation from SAG to change ramp closure displays for open house:
  - Take off all analysis numbers and just provide a poster showing the four ramps being evaluated for potential closure.
  - The City of Spokane expressed concern that they are reviewing the material hours before the public open house. SAG members want to be more thoroughly engaged with this ramp closure analysis.
  - Discussion that SAG members received information and were polled on strategies at the end of March.